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NORTHWEST WASHINGTON SYNOD
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"Soundings"

Property of
Graduate Theological Union
MAR 2 0 1990

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and "Soundings" Editor

Volume III, Issue 3 MARCH, 1990

GETTING OFF THE HILL

This past month just prior to the convening of the Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, those of us who had joined a LITE-sponsored continuing education tour had opportunity to engage in private conversations with the newly elected LWF President, Dr. Gottfried Baakemeier, at his church headquarters in Porte Alegre. He shared with us both the promises and the problems confronting the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), a growing Portuguese-speaking church founded by German immigrants in the early 19th century, and which today numbers about one million members.

Bishop Baakemeier spoke of the urgency now facing Brazil, the fifth largest country in the world, which covers almost half of South America. Potentially a rich country with vast mineral and agricultural resources as well as modern industrialization, Brazil today suffers from uncontrolled inflation (annual rate of 1,765%), high unemployment, and a massive foreign debt. Rural people remain desperately poor, and every city has its "favelas" or shanty towns.

Against a background of oppression, injustice and exploitation I began to understand Dr. Baakemeier's insistence that the Lutherans in Brazil "must see and feel the suffering. We must identify ourselves with the outcry of the suffering victims of the world. We cannot talk of the sufferings of others from a safe distance and fail to join their outcry. We must *get off the hill* and share the Good News, believing that Jesus Christ is God's answer to the cry for salvation."

Yes, *get off the hill*--a challenge to everyone, whether a member of the ELCA or the IECLB!

Dr. Baakemeier's words suddenly become very personal. "Only as a missionary church will the IECLB (and might I add, the ELCA) have a future. It's a question of survival. With parishes being emptied as members move to the large cities and spread throughout the country, the traditional Lutheran congregation is being destroyed. Without attracting new members, it will not be possible to develop congregational life or build up the church. It is the church's task to attract the great number of people who are not tied to any church, those without roots, those in our society who are searching for a community of faith which will welcome them."

As I reflected on the rapid transformation of Brazilian society eroding the German cultural tradition which once gave stability and identity to the IECLB, I could identify with Dr. Baakemeier's assertion that ethnicity no longer works to identify and unite Lutheran members. As other ethnic groups participate in the church's life, the IECLB is discovering new experiences of faith and theology. I wondered how the Brazilian church could get along without inclusive quota mandates. I asked myself whether the ELCA could learn from our sister church in Brazil how to best conceptualize Lutheranism in a pluralistic society.

And what lessons, if any, can we in the Northwest Washington Synod learn from our partner church which is attempting to respond positively to the challenge of impoverishment which is crushing the majority of the Brazilian population? I was impressed to learn that the

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"GETTING OFF THE HILL" (cont.)
congregations have united around common goals and have given a top priority commitment to justice and social responsibility. Who would dare to disagree with Bishop Baakemeier's conclusion that "a Christian church cannot close its ears to the cry of those who suffer. It would betray the commandment of love and would ignore the preference which God reserved specifically for the poor (Luke 6:20). God does not want needy people. For this reason the church must work for justice, better distribution of goods, and the well being of all."

I am grateful to Dr. Baakemeier for an eye-opening continuing education experience, for indeed, I saw firsthand the Christian gospel being lived out and practiced as Brazilian Lutherans struggled to *get off the hill*.

I would like to think that someday soon the tables can be overturned, and we in the Northwest Washington Synod can play host to visiting partner church people and continue the dialogue ... for we have so much to learn.

L. Paul Bartling

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION90 KICKOFF

The stage is set. The Bishop's Task Force assigned to plan the two MISSION90 orientation events has completed the planning. Bishop Knutson is looking forward to sharing with every congregation (pastor(s) and two or three lay leaders) on the Sundays of March 18 at Queen Anne Lutheran, Seattle, and March 25 at Harbour Pointe Lutheran, Mukilteo.

If you have not as yet sent in your reply card, please inform our registrar post-haste: Rev. Jan Nesse, 546-4153.

WEEKEND OF PRAYER FOR SO. AFRICA & NAMIBIA

The Nelson Mandela National Reception Committee--USA calls on the interfaith community to set aside the weekend of March 16-18 as a national time of recognition and re-dedication to the

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SO. AFRICA & NAMIBIA (cont.

struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa. On this weekend they ask that congregations nationwide offer prayers for the South African people and provide information to their members concerning the need for continued vigilance against the unjust system of apartheid. The weekend of March 16-18 has been chosen because it precedes the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre (March 21, 1960) which focused the attention of the community of nations on the pain and schism in South African society. March 21, 1990 will also mark the independence of Namibia (see related article elsewhere in "Soundings"). Therefore, prayers of thanksgiving for Namibia's new freedom are also suggested.

For further information contact The Nelson Mandela National Reception Committee (USA), (202) 546-7961, fax: (202) 546-1545; or Dennis Frado, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, (202) 783-7505, fax: (202) 783-7502.

INVEST ONE YEAR...BE A DIACONAL ASSOCIATE

Diaconal Associates invest one year to serve in schools, retirement homes, Lutheran social service agencies, parishes, children's homes, shelters for the homeless, and year-round camps. They are teachers, activities directors, promotional assistants, nurses aides, evangelism outreach persons, parish visitors, child care workers, shelter directors, and secretaries.

Individuals 18 to 75 years of age interested in investing a year of their life using the skills they have wherever they are needed are invited to make application before June 1.

For information contact the Diaconal Year Program, Deaconess Community of the ELCA, 801 Merion Square Road, Gladwyne, PA 19035-1599; or call (215) 642-8838.

JAPANESE HOMESTAY HOSTS NEEDED

The UW Extension Office is seeking hosts willing to share their homes with Japanese university students (one- or two-night weekends) in late July and August. For information on how to offer your home, call Pamela Sonderland at 543-0888.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR PERSONS OF COLOR AND LANGUAGE

Be sure to check part B of the March Action Packet for information regarding grants of up to $1,000 per year for Native American, Asian, Black, and Hispanic students who are members of ELCA congregations and will attend any accredited college or university during the 1990/91 academic year. The awards are intended for undergraduate study and are renewable. Award decisions will be based on financial need and the availability of scholarship resources.

The awards will be made through a paratnership between your congregation and the ELCA Division for Education, with the congregation providing 20% and the Division 80%. A nomination form is included in the Action Packet.

RESOURCE PACKET ON MENTAL ILLNESS

A packet published by the American Psychiatric Association contains some very useful information for clergy and congregations regarding mental illness. The packet is available free from:

APA Division of Public Affairs
Department CL
1400 K St. NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 682-6220

May is Mental Health Month, and October has a week set aside for Mental Illness Awareness Week. In the Action Packet for May-June, 1990, you will find a bulletin insert prepared to help pastors and congregations have more information about mental illness.

Additional questions may be directed to Dennis Busse, Director of Ministries with Persons with Handicapping Conditions, ELCA Division for Social Ministry Organizations, (312) 380-2692.

MISSIONARY IN EXILE AVAILABLE TO SPEAK

Rev. Bill Dexheimer, ELCA pastor and missionary-in-exile from El Salvador, is available for speaking in ELCA and ecumenical settings. Pastor Dexheimer worked with the Lutheran Synod and the Lutheran University of El Salvador. He is currently in exile in the U.S. because he

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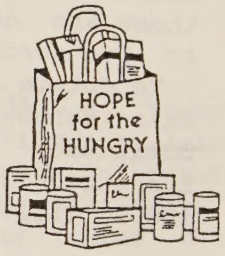
MISSIONARY IN EXILE (cont.)

received a death threat last November. Bill and other exiled church workers are speaking out across the nation, telling the story of a church working for peace in the midst of war and for justice in the depth of poverty and oppression.

If you would like Bill to speak, contact the ELCA Division for Global Mission, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4192 or call 1-800-637-3522, x2630. Priority will be given to gatherings that include a large audience, are ecumenically diverse, and offer the opportunity to spend several days working in the area with local groups.

Bill Dexheimer will join Salvadoran composer Guillermo Cuellar and Mexican percussionist Jose Antonio MacGregor for the 1990 Global Mission Event, June 28-July 1 at Pacific Lutheran University.

1989 WORLD HUNGER APPEAL RECEIPTS



Our synod's total giving for world hunger in 1989 was $98,144, or $3.02 per capita. The total giving for Region I was $526,753, or $3.71 per capita.

The World Hunger Appeal offerings received nationally for 1989 were over $10,000,000. Your efforts on behalf of the ELCA provide the financial support for programs such as the airlift of food and medical supplies in the Sudan.

The PBS television series "Breakthrough on Hunger" has been renamed "Local Heroes, Global Change". It will be broadcast on May 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 10 pm Eastern Standard Time. Please check your local listings for broadcast times and publicize to your congregation.

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE FROM COMPASS CENTER

Call Robbin Holden (461-7835) for details and arrangements if you desire a speaker for your congregation for a temple talk, adult forum, or pulpit supply.

PAROCHIAL REPORTS OVERDUE TO SYNOD OFFICE

Please mail both Parts A and C of your 1989 Parochial Report to the Synod Office if you have not done so already!

"PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" PROGRAM STARTED

Zion Lutheran in Ferndale challenges all congregations of our synod to measure the distance to the next ELCA congregation closest to them and begin a national network of "penny miles" to be sent to Lutheran World Relief. This program was started by 5th and 6th graders in Odessa, WA, who found it took 16 pennies for one foot when taped together. Do you accept the "Pennies from Heaven" challenge?

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN YOUTH EXCHANGE

ICYE provides global opportunities to high school and college students for student exchanges in Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe, and Latin America, and costs less than a year of college education. Some scholarships to qualified candidates are available. There is also an alternative summer workcamp and study tour program for those who cannot take out an entire year to live abroad.

To obtain detailed information regarding this worthwhile program, contact U.S. Committee, Internatioanl Christian Youth Exchange, 134 West 26th St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 206-7307

HANDS-ON GOLD LEAF GILDING PROGRAM

Bethany Lutheran at Greenlake (Seattle) is sponsoring a hands-on participation program for gold leaf gilding. The gilder, Charles Douglas, will present a lecture and slide presentation on tradition gold leaf gilding and its relationship to liturgical art and church architecture to congregations who wish to pursue this type of project.

For more information contact Pastor Stuart Lundahl at Bethany Lutheran, 523-4454.

"LIVING GOD'S GIFTS"

All pastors of Region I received a pink file with the title "Living God's Gifts." This is the first of four annual stewardship studies proposed by lay people in our region and prepared by David Workman of Olympia. The study series emphasizes the fact that

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"LIVING GOD'S GIFTS" (cont.)

stewardship is more than funding and provides a resource to people to deal with decisions and stress. The material is presented on one-page study sheets that can be adapted to a variety of learning settings and age groups. You are encouraged to make use of this fine self-help resource.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

TITLE: INVITATION TO SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS

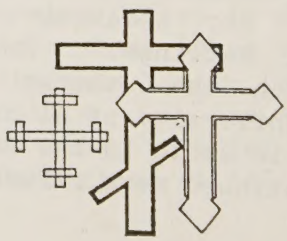
ORIGIN: Bishop Knutson and Synod Council

WHEREAS The third annual Northwest Washington Synod Assembly is scheduled for June 15-17, 1990 at Pacific Lutheran University; and

WHEREAS resolutions will be reviewed by the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to publication in the pre-Assembly packet to be mailed to delegates in May; and

WHEREAS only resolutions which are of overriding importance or germane to the issues of the Assembly will be accepted after April 1;

BE IT RESOLVED that any group or individual wishing to submit a resolution for consideration at the Assembly MUST do so in writing by April 1, 1990. Send resolutions to the Synod Office, 5519 Phinney Ave. No., Seattle, WA 98103-5899, Attn: Linda Larson, Synod Secretary.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STYROFOAM CUP DEBATE

The Synod Office has received extensive information from the Polystyrene Packaging Council regarding the impact of polystyrene on our environment. They certainly have a different point of view!

If you are interested in hearing their side of the issue, write for information to R. Jerry Johnson, Executive Director, Polystyrene Packaging Council, Inc., 1025 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 508, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 822-6424.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY MARCH 21

Citizens of Namibia and their friends around the world will celebrate the independence of Africa's last colony on March 21. After 106 years of brutal occupation, first by Germany and then by South Africa, Namibia will raise its own flag and install its own freely elected government.

The task of nation-building will be extremely difficult because South Africa has left Namibia virtually bankrupt and deeply divided, having conscripted Namibian soldiers to fight against their own people. Northern Namibia is also threatened with serious famine after nine years of drought and destruction of property by the colonial regime.

Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, one of two Lutheran bishops in the country, will be instrumental in uniting political parties to leave past mistakes behind and unite to build one Namibia.

Please refer to the flyer in this newsletter for information regarding a service of celebration in Seattle on March 20. Because Namibian time is 10 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time, Namibia will already be in the midst of its celebrations when people of Northwest Washington gather to pray here.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

The World Mission Prayer League (WMPL), an inter-Lutheran missionary society, is sponsoring an inquirer's workshop for those considering missionary service. The workshop is designed to answer any of

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MISSIONARY SERVICE (cont.)

the most commonly asked questions regarding missionary service and opportunities with WMPL. The one-day event will take place on March 31, 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Lutheran Bible Institute in Issaquah. The cost is $7.50/person or $10/couple, including lunch.

For more information or to make reservations, call LBI at 392-0400.

TOURING YOUTH MUSICAL GROUP TO PERFORM

"First Light", an enthusiastic and unique group of 200 youth from Prince of Peace Lutheran, Burnsville, MN, will present the musical, "Water Life" on April 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Puget Sound Christian College, 410-4th Ave. No., Edmonds. Free will offering. A fantastic event for your youth group and all members of your congregation. Don't miss it!

TAIZE LENTEN WORSHIP

Every Friday in Lent at 6:30 p.m., young adults of all denominations (teens to late 30's) will gather at St. James Cathedral in Seattle to pray around the cross. Their prayer will be modeled after the joyous sung prayer of the Taize community in France, where thousands of young people regularly gather.

Cathedral Music Director, James Savage, just having returned from a week of prayer with the Taize community, will share his experiences. On the last Friday, April 6, there will be a simple supper after the service.

Call 622-3559 for more information. St. James is located at 804-9th Avenue between Marion and Columbia.

WEEKEND FOR SINGLE PARENTS & CHILDREN

"Building Each Other Up in Christ" is the theme of this conference open to all single parents with or without their children. Co-sponsored by the United Methodist Church and our synod's Board of Social Concerns, it will be held May 11-13 at Camp Indianola on the Kitsap Peninsula. Child care will be provided for very little ones. Contact Virginia Sypher, Registrar, 1514 NW 59th St., Seattle 98107.

CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Help make history! Come to Washington D.C. on May 13-15 to join hundreds of people who belong to the member organizations of Churches for Middle East Peace in meetings with members of Congress. Advocacy will be based on the following points: 1) the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized borders; 2) the right of Palestinians to self-determination and sovereignty; 3) consistency of U.S. aid with U.S. policy regarding human rights violations and with opposition to Israeli settlement in Occupied Territories; 4) an international conference for seeking peace in the region; and 5) the U.S. actively seeking a reduction of weapons throughout the Middle East.

Churches for Middle East Peace is an ecumenical program of which the Washington offices of the ELCA is a member. Contact Dennis Frado, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, 122 C St., NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20001; (202) 783-7507. Registration deadline is April 25.

REGION I LAY MINISTERS RETREAT

"Stirring Up the People of God" is the theme for the 1990 annual Region I Association of Professional Lutheran Lay Ministers retreat on May 14-17. Registration materials were mailed to all congregations. Membership in APLLM is not necessary to participate. April 15 is the deadline for the $150 registration fee. Bible study will be led by Trudy Thorleifson, seminary intern working with the downtown Seattle churches, and the keynoter will be Jon Magnuson, Lutheran Campus Pastor at the University of Washington.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our synod Global Mission Committee is anxious that our members take advantage of a rare opportunity to participate in the Global Mission event which will be held in our "back yard" at PLU June 28-July 1. GME happenings are scheduled in three

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GLOBAL MISSION EVENT (cont.)

different locations every year. The last event in the Pacific Northwest took place 10 years ago. Incredible amounts of creative energies are expended at both the Churchwide and regional levels to make the GME a lifelong highlight.

We need the assistance of every pastor and every congregation's Global Mission Advocate to "talk up", promote, and recruit participants for GME 1990. Please post the enclosed flyer as well as the promotional material in the March 1990 packet. Thank you, and see you there!

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

SYNOD-WIDE JUNIOR HIGH RALLY

"Where in Your World...is Jesus" is the theme of this year's Junior High Rally March 23-24 at Faith, Redmond. Call Cathy Nelson at 885-1810 for details.

HOLDEN YOUTH WEEKENDS

Holden Weekends 3 and 4 are filled. Weekends 1 and 2 still have some room, though inquiries are coming in at a fast pace. Send in your registration!

WESTERN STATES YOUTH GATHERING

There's still room to sign up for this exciting gathering June 30-July 6 in sunny Santa Clara, CA. So catch the spirit, and register now! For more information, call Dave Ellingson or Boots Winterstein at 624-0093; or Dave Mohr, Gathering Coordinator, at (415) 283-3722.

MIDDLE COLLEGE FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES OR JUNIORS

Middle College is a 6-week program to ease the transition from high school to college. Offered at Pacific Lutheran University June 16-July 27, it gives high school graduates or a high school junior an opportunity to preview educational experience and future goals through intensive counseling and testing and a chance to sharpen learning skills in order to compete in college. Deadline to apply is May 1. Write to Dr. Judy Carr, Dean, Special Academic Programs, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA 98447-7130, or call 535-7130.

GIFTED PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

Pacific Luuheran University and the Tacoma Area Council on Giftedness fund is sponsoring jointly an enrichment opportunity on the PLU campus for academically gifted high school students. The SUMMER SCHOLARS PROGRAM is a 3-week residential experience on the PLU campus July 9-27, designed for students completing their sophomore or junior year of high school. Students may select either the writing workshop or the science course.

Nominations of gifted students must be received by April 15. Financial aid available. Cost is $80 inclusive. Contact Dr. Judy Carr at the address and telephone on the previous page.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS PLANNED

"Love in Action" is the theme for two Region I youth leadership schools in August. In addition to speakers, worship, and small groups, practical "how to" workshops will cover such topics as leading a Bible study, planning worship, planning retreats, servant events, games, etc. Send your youth and sponsors and help equip them for church leadership roles.

Leadership EAST will be held August 18-21 at Flathead Lutheran Camp, Kalispell, MT. Leadership WEST will be held August 23-26 at LBI, Issaquah. Information and registration materials will be sent in the spring.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY WORK PROJECT

Here's a unique opportunity for youth ages 16-30 to join a work project in Estonia July 23-August 23. An ELCA seminary intern from the Pacific Northwest, Linda Nou, is presently working in Talinn, Estonia, and has invited our youth to work with the Lutheran Church and an ecumenical group to refurbish a house for a youth center, plus other work projects. Cost: approximately $1200-$1500. For details, contact Cheryl Kulas, 746-7300, or Jane Prestbye, 392-0400.

SYNOD/REGIONAL FAMILY NEWS

We report the following deaths and ask that these families be remembered in prayer: Walter "Pat" Wolbrecht (father of Tim Wolbrecht) died Feb. 15 in Portland; Joseph Melby died Mar. 3 at the age of 96; the mother of Zara Herwick died on Feb. 26 in Lincoln, NE; the infant granddaughter of Dick and Stella Nieman died Feb. 22 in Sequim; Ed Nesse passed away in Tacoma Feb. 13; Phil Peterson died in Fargo, ND Feb. 12; Bishop Larry Hand of the SE Pennsylvania Synod died on Feb. 24 at the age of 59, the first ELCA bishop to die in office . . . Bethany of the Northwest in Everett recently welcomed Donald Peterson as their new Administrator . . . Bob Armstrong is gaining back his strength and adjusting to living with diabetes. It will be a while, however, before he resumes full-time work with Region I Financial Services . . . Columbia Lutheran Home has received a $4,500 grant from AAL to organize "Columbia Circle Clubs" in 22 congregations to generate volunteers, ministry involvement, awareness and funding for programs serving the elderly.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

DEATH AND GRIEF WORKSHOP FOR CLERGY

The Washington State Funeral Directors Association presents a Death and Grief Workshop for Clergy on April 4 at the LaQuinta Motor Inn, 1425 E. 27th St., Tacoma, 9 am to 4 pm. Dr. Alan Wolfelt, practicing clinical thanatologist, educator and author, and director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Co, will lead the workshop. Pre-registration is recommended by March 27. Complimentary registration includes lunch and materials. Call 633-3509.

LOOKING FOR SIMPLER LIFESTYLE?

"Enough is Enough: Sufficiency as Justice Lifestyle," a discussion of

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SIMPLER LIFESTYLE (cont.)

lifestyles that are simpler materially, more nourishing spiritually, and sounder environmentally, will be held April 19, 6-9 pm, in the Great Hall of St. Stephen's Episcopal, 4805 NE 45th, Seattle. Discussion will be led by John Schramm, former director of Holden Village and current assistant to the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, frequent lecturer on issues of lifestyle, spirituality, peace and justice.

Admission to the discussion is free, but a donation is requested for the preceding soup and bread supper. Call 393-0300 or 522-7144 for more information.

WORKSHOP ON CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUALITY

The Center for Spiritual Development is presenting Abbot Thomas Keating for a weekend workshop on Contemplative Spirituality, May 4-6. The fundamental purpose of the workshoip is to awaken in church leaders the contemplative dimension of the Gospel with its dynamic capacity for purification, healing, and transformation in Christ. It is also designed to show how ministers might begin to offer similar opportunities for their congregations. It will be held at St. Joseph School, 700-18th Ave. E., Seattle.

To register, contact the Center for Spiritual Development, 1245-10th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98102.

Travel Seminar to Israel & the Occupied Territories

This travel seminar will leave New York May 7 for an intensive 14-day seminar, including encounters with people representing many sectors of Palestinian and Israeli society. For more information, call Stacey Kitahata at 1-800-638-3522, or the Center for Global Education at (612) 330-1159.

HOLDEN VILLAGE

ELDERHOSTEL PROGRAMS

Two Elderhostel programs will be offered at Holden Village in May. The first is May 14-19 featuring sessions on Ecology of the Mountains, Parables and Beatitudes, and the Newspaper and the Bible. The

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ELDERHOSTEL (cont.)

second week is May 28-June 2, featuring classes in Discovering Lake Chelan, the Power of Parables, and the Newspaper and the Bible.

To register, write to Elderhostel, Inc., 80 Boylston St., Suite 400, Boston, MA 02116, or call (617) 426-8056.

EUROPEAN TRAVEL WITH A FEMINIST TWIST

Dr. Faith Burgess, Lutheran church historian and Vice President and Academic Dean at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, will host a tour to Europe June 9-23. "Networking in the 1990's--A Feminist Introduction to the New European Community," will afford participants an opportunity to engage in dialogue with significant European feminists in Norway, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. Presentations will deal with theology and feminism, women in the work force, and the role of women in the political, economic and educational sectors of society. Tour price is $2,595. Write to Sagausa Travel Intl., P.O. Box 234, Spring Grove, MN 55974; (507) 498-5819.

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM LITE

"Drugs/Narcotics & Society: The Church Responds" is the theme of LITE's second seminar on the problem of drug addiction in today's society, to be held April 28 at PLU, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm in the University Center.

Lutheran Institute for Theological Education

The annual LITE Summer Institute at PLU will be held July 9-12 with the theme, "Transformed Images of Power: Reflections on Christian Life & Ministry." Tuition is $110 ($25 for spouses and retired), room/board extra. Call 535-7342.

AN EVENT FOR WOMEN CLERGY

"Stirring Up the Nest", an event to celebrate 20 years of women's ordination, is being held in conjunction with the Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA. All ordained clergywomen and women now attending seminaries, awaiting call, between calls, or no longer on the clergy roster are invited to take part. The

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"STIRRING UP THE NEST" cont.
conference runs July 11-14 at the Convention Center of Inn at the Park in Anaheim, CA. Participants must pre-register before May 1. Registration fee is $45 until March 1, and $55 after. To register, contact the ELCA Commission for Women, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631, or call 1-800-NET-ELCA.

ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISTS

The 4th annual conference of the Academy for Evangelists will hold three events this summer with the theme, "Evangelization...More Than Talk!" They will be held June 11-5 at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus; June 18-22 at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul; and July 16-20 at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley.

To register, contact the Institute for Mission in the USA, 2199 E. Main St., Columbus, OH 43209; (614) 235-4136.

CPE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

A one-year residency program of Clinical Pastoral Education will be offered at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) beginning in September. $14,500 salary and health care insurance provided. The program is supervised by a Presbyterian and a Lutheran minister.

Contact Rev. Susan Thornton, Asst. Dir. of Chaplaincy Services, HCMC, 701 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55415, or call (612) 347-2260 for application materials.

WANT ADS

ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR POSITIONS

Our Savior's in Everett is seeking a part-time organist/choir director. Annual salary of $8,500 plus two weeks paid vacation and medical coverage. Position available in the summer or sooner. Send resume and inquiries to Pastor Josef Aalbue, Box 2927, Everett, WA 98203; 252-0413.

Northlake Lutheran in Kenmore needs an organist to begin April 1. Call Eula Hickam evenings, 822-4644.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR--LSS/ALASKA

Lutheran Social Services of Alaska (LSSA) is searching for a full-time Executive Director with skills in areas of supervision, program management, consultation, budget development and supervision of day-to-day operation of a statewide social service system for the Lutheran churches in Alaska (ELCA and LCMS). Salary range $35,000-$42,000 DOE. Send resume with three references by May 1 to LSSA c/o Alaska Synod, 4201 Tudor Centre Dr., #315, Anchorage, AK 99508; (907) 561-8899.

PRACTICE ORGANS FOR SALE

The University of Washington Music Department is soliciting bids for the sale of two pipe organs that have been used as practice organs. Contact Derek Baker at 543-1226 to arrange to view and play the instruments. Questions about the organs and how to submit bids may be addressed to Carole Terry, 543-1184.

SLEEPING BAGS NEEDED

Immanuel Lutheran in Seattle is recruiting sleeping bags for their shelter residents to be given out on the last night the shelter is open for the season, March 18. Bags may be new or clean-used and delivered to the church office.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS AT CAMP LUTHERWOOD

There are several volunteer positions available at Camp Lutherwood in Bellingham. Call Bob or Doug at the camp for more information, 734-7652.

VOLUNTEER IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Skilled laborers and helpers are urgently needed in the Virgin Islands to re-build after Hurricane Hugo. Many people are still residing in temporary housing or tents. Tasks are varied, but include roof and wall construction, carpentry, debris removal, painting, hauling, etc. Two-week commitments are requested. Housing, on-island transportation, and the majority of meals are provided. Call or write Dorothy Jeffcoat, Region 9 Center for Mission, 756 W. Peachtree St., NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30308; (404) 881-6145.

SELAH! *An occasional column of commentary from the faculty of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California edited by Professors Robert Smith and Martha Stortz*

The Hardest Verse in Matthew

by Professor Robert Smith, New Testament

This is the Year of Matthew, and we should confront the hardest verse in Matthew and not try to dodge it. It is part of our Gospel for Passion Sunday: "All the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'" (Matt 27:25)

The Good News Bible paraphrases: "Let the punishment for his death fall on us and on our children!" And how it has! Generations of Jews have been slandered as Christ-killers, and Matthew has been co-opted as cheerleader for anti-Jewish mobs.

I the traditional interpretation has misjudged both Matthew and the Jews.

Let's begin with that hard word "blood." By substituting the word "punishment," the Good News Bible has muddied the water and perpetuated bad news. Goethe got it right: "Blood is a very special juice" (Faust). Scripture says bluntly, "The life is in the blood" (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:11).

The dictionary calls blood "a red liquid that carries oxygen through the bodies of animals." It's more than that. Think of colorful terms like "bloodcurdling, blood relative, bloodshed, and blood-sucker."

Matthew tells how ancient authorities (mostly "blue bloods") moved against Jesus "in cold blood," how Pilate was pressed by "blood thirsty" clamorings, and how Jesus was crucified by tough legionnaires "blooded" in Rome's battles and immune to cruelty.

Matthew ponders the awesome power of Jesus' blood in four significant passages in his Passion Narrative.

1) Matthew shares with co-evangelists only the first and even here exhibits an important difference. The cup is Jesus' "blood of the covenant poured out for many" (Exod 24:8), and then Matthew adds "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28; cf. Lev 17:11; Rom 3:24-25). Here is a great irony: through one man's "blood" (dying), "many" get life. 1

2) Judas strikes a cold-blooded bargain for 30 coins (Matt 27:3-10). But then, Matthew alone notes, Judas "repented." He had come to see Jesus as "innocent blood" (27:4). Now despising the silver as "blood money" (27:6), he threw it to the priests. Fearing contact with that money (as though it were alive with radioactive power), they did not add it to the temple treasury but with it purchased "a Field of Blood" (27:8). Again the blood of Jesus works great good. It purchased a final resting place (peace) for strangers. How fitting! How true!

3) Pilate at the exact moment when he rendered his official judgment against Jesus also rendered a personal judgment for Jesus: "I am innocent of this man's blood" (27:24), as though to say "Jesus is innocent, and I, Pilate, would like to be innocent as well." Christian readers should hear the irony, the paradox, in this saying of Pilate's. The one way people can really be innocent is by not washing their hands of this man's blood!

4) The fourth and final mention of "blood" is the most troublesome one. "All the people" cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (27:25). This climactic mention of "blood" is usually taken as Matthew's indictment not only of the 50 or 75 people who stood in the courtyard and uttered the cry but as a judgment upon the whole of Israel ("us") in every age ("our children"). And it has been so used by generations of Christians with dreadful consequences for generations of Jews.

But this cry, like Pilate's pathetic handwashing, is full of irony. Matthew wants us to see the irony and weep with him for that uncomprehending crowd. Their cry is so oddly true! The blood of Jesus is on them--for their blessing!

The blood of Jesus speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel (23:35; Heb 12:24). And Matthew heard the "voice" of Jesus' blood. So he is full of compassion as he charts the connections of Jesus' blood with disciples (26:28), with betrayers and strangers (27:3-10), with officials (27:24) and even the crowds of enemies (27:25). The one who mounts up on the tree is named "Jesus" (1:21-23), and his blood has awesome power to save "all the people."

Matthew is not writing to whip up outrage toward unbelievers. Here and everywhere he urges us readers to see that the "blood" of Jesus (the tender mercies of God!) rests on us and on all.

If we can return and review our misjudgment of 27:25, we will recover Matthew as a powerful advocate of the mercy of God. And relations among the various children of Abraham will be happier in the millennium ahead than in the millennium passing.